

# SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES

## Tournament Guidelines - 2002

1. Fish must be caught in accordance with all state and federal laws to qualify to earn points or awards. All anglers, including female and youth, must strike their fish in order to be eligible for series points or awards. After a fish strikes, only the angler is allowed to touch the rod. Once the leader is brought within the grasp of the mate or is wound to the rod tip, then the angler may have assistance to tag and release or boat the fish. Vessels may provide assistance to other vessels for boating fish.

2. White marlin and sailfish are tag and release only. The minimum size for blue marlin is 101 inches measured in a curved line along the body from the fork of the tail to the tip of the lower jaw.

*Note: 101 inches exceeds the federally mandated minimum size limit by two (2) inches. Should the federal size limit be increased, the minimum size for blue marlin eligible for weighing in SC Governor's Cup Series tournaments will be increased automatically to exceed the new minimum size by two (2) inches.*

3. A penalty of 300 points will be assessed against a boat for each blue marlin brought to the dock not meeting the minimum South Carolina Governor's Cup Series size requirements.

4. Boats guilty of wanton waste of fish taken in a Series event will be disqualified from earning points in that event.

5. Scoring for eligible billfish weighed-in is based solely on those points officially awarded each boat by each tournament. Boats earn one point per pound and fraction of a pound for their single heaviest billfish weighed in each tournament. No points are awarded for additional billfish weighed in any one tournament.

6. Only blue marlin, white marlin and sailfish are eligible for tag and release points. Scoring for billfish tagged and released in good condition is as follows:

Blue Marlin	300 points
White marlin	150 points
Sailfish	100 points

7. To qualify for tag and release points, a billfish must be fought to the boat according to program guidelines, a scientific tag issued by a state or national fisheries research program implanted in the fish's back muscle, and the hook removed or the leader cut as close to the fish's mouth as possible prior to release.

*Note: Federal law prohibits the boating of undersized billfish.*

8. White marlin and sailfish may not be brought into the boat. Any white marlin or sailfish boated for pictures or any other reason **will not** receive tag and release points. Blue marlin brought into the boat for measurement without the use of a gaff, harpoon or other device will qualify for tag and release points provided they are returned to the water in a healthy condition and are meet the federal minimum size limit. (currently 99 inches).

*Note: Federal law prohibits the boating of undersized billfish.*

- 9.** Any billfish gaffed, harpooned or otherwise injured in an attempt to boat the fish will not qualify for tag and release points, even if ultimately returned to the water.
- 10.** For a vessel to qualify any billfish for points, every person aboard the vessel 18 years of age or older must sign an affidavit swearing that all rules and regulations were observed in reference to the described fish. Failure of any person to sign, for any reason, disqualifies that fish.
- 11.** Affidavits must be completed the day the tag and release or catch occurs, except when a medical emergency involving the boat's crew prohibits completion of the form or when a mechanically disabled boat cannot return within the prescribed weigh-in period. In these instances, the forms must be completed and returned within ten (10) days of the tag and release. Boats fishing out of other marinas or ports must fax or hand-deliver the completed tag and release affidavit to tournament headquarters prior to the close of the weighing scales on the day of catch with the exception as noted above.
- 12.** Boats will be awarded 25 participation points for each Series tournament entered up to a maximum of four events. A boat's points total will include participation points as indicated along with points for landed or tagged and released billfish from all tournaments fished. Points will count toward aggregate point totals for Outstanding Billfish Boat and Outstanding Billfish Conservationist. Points cannot be transferred from one boat to another.
- 13.** Boats must fish a minimum of two Series tournaments to qualify for Outstanding Billfish Boat and Outstanding Billfish Conservationist. Vessels fishing only one tournament qualify for Outstanding Billfish, Lady Angler, and Youth Angler awards.
- 14.** In the event of a tie, the boat accumulating their points the earliest shall be the winner. If a tie still remains, the boat fishing in the most Series events will be declared the winner.
- 15.** Awards will be presented for the heaviest dolphin, wahoo and tuna caught by boats participating in the series and for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place outstanding female and youth (under sixteen years of age) anglers. The awards for female and youth angler will be awarded for the heaviest tuna, dolphin or wahoo if no female or youth angler has landed or tagged a legal billfish. Billfish caught by female or youth anglers will earn regular Series points for the species.
- 16.** A Blue Water Conservation Award will be presented to the boat accumulating the most points tagging dolphin (50 points), yellowfin tuna (100 points) and wahoo (150 points). All fish must be caught on legal Series tournament fishing days and tagged using official tags supplied by the Marine Resources Division's Marine Gamefish Tagging Program. Completed tagging reports will serve as official entry forms and must be submitted to Marine Resources Division personnel working the tournament or the weighmaster on the same day the fish was tagged.
- 17.** Creel limits for dolphin are 7 per angler per day or 26 per boat per day, with no minimum size restriction. Creel limit for yellowfin tuna is 3 per angler per day with a minimum legal size of 27 inches curved body fork length. There is no minimum size restriction or creel limit on wahoo.
- 18.** All awards are presented to the boat. Invitations to the annual Governor's Cup awards reception are limited to winning boat crews and boat owners whose boats fish two or more yearly series events.

**19.** It is the intent of the S.C. Governor's Cup to encourage release of healthy billfish, therefore the use of 130 lb. class line is allowed.

**20.** A boat owner may request an official ruling from the Governor's Cup Series. The request for a ruling must be submitted in writing to a member of the Tournament Committee. The Tournament Committee shall rule on the request within seven (7) days. Any ruling of the Tournament Committee may be appealed by writing to the Board of Directors within forty-eight (48) hours, excluding weekend days and holidays. The Board shall render results of an appeal, in writing, to the appellant within thirty (30) days. All decisions of the Board are final. All rulings will focus solely on compliance with Governor's Cup Series rules, not individual tournament rules.